

PERCEPTIONS



Amber West

PERCEPTIONS

A Collection of
POETRY, FICTION, AND ART
by
the Students and Faculty
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This issue of Perceptions is dedicated to

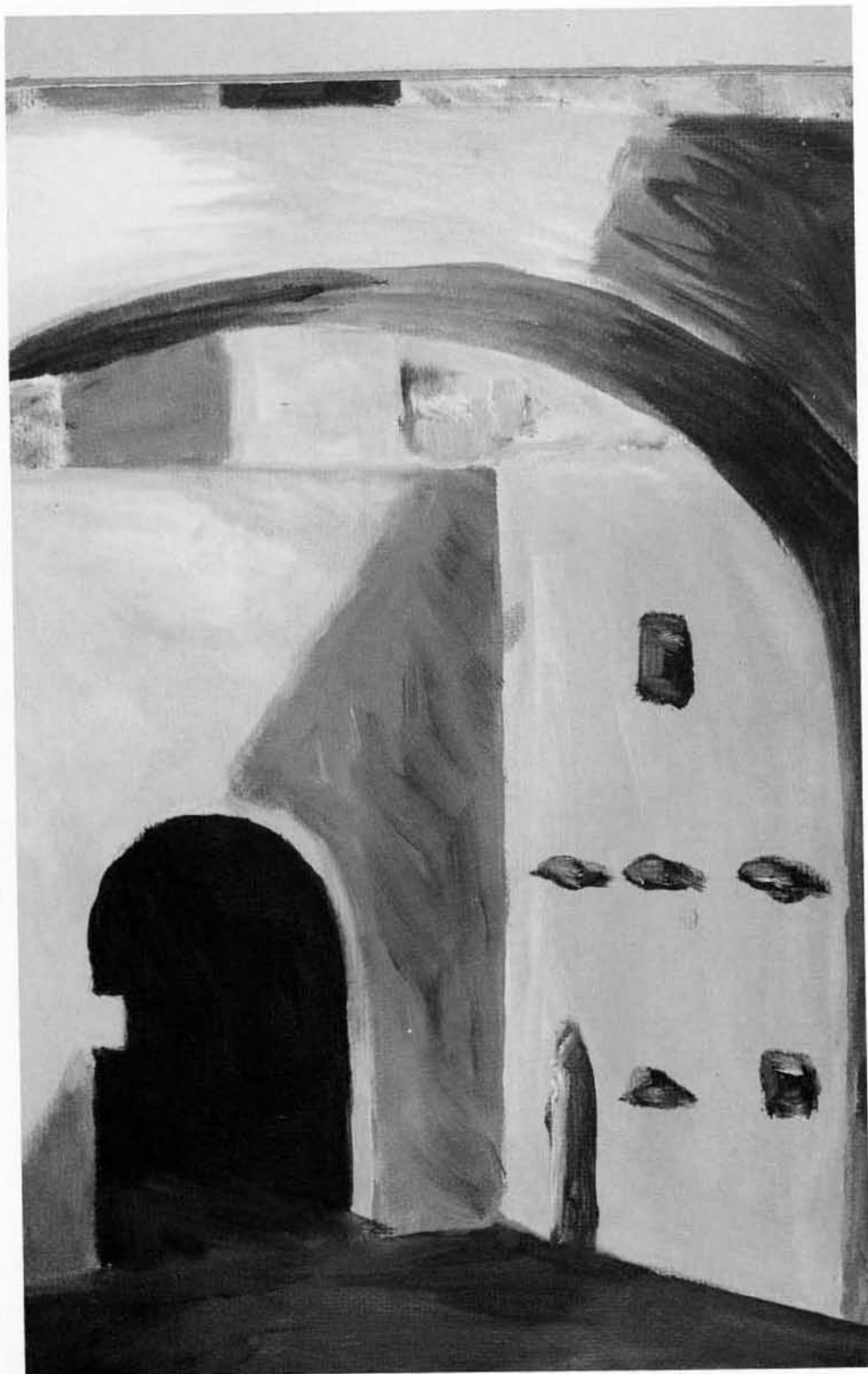
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Ryan Simpson, "Passageways"

ROBBY J. SPRIGGS

THEIR WYRM SHALL NOT DIE

It was a cold autumn night. The stars sparkled in the pure blackness of the sky. A few ambitious leaves still clung to the nearly bare poplars and oaks of the forest. Terry ran, panting down the narrow trail which wound like a giant serpent through the thickness of the woods. He ran clumsily in the darkness. He could hardly see. His lungs ached. He fell. Dizzily, he tried to get to his feet. He fell again, this time against a tree. He reached out and touched it. It was a pine. He could feel its needles. There was no mistaking a pine, even if he had lost his glasses somewhere back in the forest.

It's funny how someone on the brink of panic always groped for something ordinary, something concrete or real, to bring them back to the rational world. "This pine is my anchor to reality," Terry thought as he grasped a low limb and slowly pulled himself to his feet. But then a horrible thought crossed his mind: "Reality didn't always fit nicely and neatly into the trite little scenarios that people created in their own minds. There was no absolute criteria for . . ."

He cut the thought off in his mind and started blindly down the trail again. The dry autumn leaves cracked beneath his feet. Terry concentrated on the crackling. It was repetitious and rhythmic. The cadence of his footfalls on the dry leaves hypnotized him, lent him a driving inner strength as he plunged ever onward.

His feelings, his thoughts, his surroundings, they all seemed so misty, so dream like—perhaps nightmarish would be a more accurate term—as if he were wandering through the forest in a somnambulistic state. He tried in vain to

turn the voices off in his head. Yet the harder he tried to block them out, the more sharply they pierced his mind. They were the voices of the people he had known all his life, or at least the voices of people he thought he had known. Things they said just an hour ago played over and over in his mind. He could not remember everything they said, just fragments, bits and pieces. But for some reason that seemed to make it worse, horribly worse. He could still hear them in his head chanting ceaselessly, "The Wyrn, the Wyrn, om ba hara the Wyrn, the Wyrn. As he ran the voices grew louder and louder. He ran faster and tried to leave the voices behind, but still they called to him from inside his head: "Om ba hara," they chanted, "Sey ra Cra, the Wyrn, the Wyrn, the Wyrn!"

"Terry, is that you?" a voice called from round a bend in the narrow trail.

Terry stopped running and listened. He heard several people calling to him from up ahead.

"It's no use, Terry," one of the voices said. "You can't get away. We'll get you. It's just a matter of time."

Terry saw the glare of flashlights beaming through the trees just a few feet away. He turned to run in the other direction but heard leaves crackling and saw the beams of more flashlights.

Another voice called out, "Some things are better left alone."

"You interfered, Terry," called another voice. "You are a threat to the Prophecy!"

They were closing in on him. He had to act fast. The strain, the fear, the fatigue—it was all too much. Terry felt sick to his stomach. He thought he might vomit. The flashlights were almost upon him. He dove into the brush off the right of the trail, pummeling himself into the viscous foliage. The thorns and branches tore at his face. Still he plunged then tripped and rolled into more thorns. As he lay and listened, he tried desperately to silence his loud breathing. Droplets of blood budded from the scratches on his forehead and mingled with the cold sweat on his face.

From the thicket Terry heard the footsteps meet. The small beams from each flashlight merged and became one sickly shining, yellow orb. He listened closely with his ear tilted toward the trail. For a moment he heard nothing. Then the voices, in perfect ghastly harmony—as if collected

by the sickly yellow light of the orb—cried out, "Terry must be caught and offered as an appeasement to the Wyrn. It is so written in the Prophecy."

"Lo! 'tis a gala night," Terry whispered under his breath. "Now where did that come from? It was probably just one of those meaningless fragments of information that the subconscious decides to store away in the back of the mind," Terry thought. "It's funny how the subconscious takes what the conscious discards and files it somewhere deep in the dusty archives of the subliminal." But why had he recalled such a verse on a night like tonight. "This night was anything but gala."

Terry's chest was still heaving. He was exhausted. Though his mind screamed madly at him to run, every muscle in his body cried for rest—sweet, peaceful rest. It was to the latter pleading that he succumbed. He saw a part in the cluster of thorns at his back. He would be safe on the other side or at least shielded nicely from the view of anyone on the trail. Lying on his belly, he wormed his way through the part in the thorns to the tiny clearing on the other side.

"I'll just rest for a minute," he thought as he lay on his back with his head on a soft, rotting log. A slight breeze was stirring now. The tops of the tall, thin pines swayed gently back and forth. As Terry watched them, he grew sleepy—so very sleepy. He knew to sleep could mean death. "But death is sleep." He slapped himself. The stinging in his left cheek brought him back—just for a moment. Then he began to nod off again. The sway of the pines was just too hypnotic—too soothing.

"Lo! 'tis a gala night," he thought, then fell asleep.

It was a murky, restless sleep. A man condemned to the guillotine in eighteenth-century France might have slept such a sleep the night before his execution.

As he slept his subconscious recreated, in dreams, what it had experienced earlier that evening....

His parents had gone to Bible study—something they did with ritual every Wednesday night. Though Terry always attended church with his parents on Sunday, he never accompanied them on Wednesday.

"It's a special night just for the elders," they had always said.

After his parents left, Terry decided to take an evening stroll through the woods. There was always something especially peaceful about the forest in the autumn. To Terry it seemed to possess a tranquil magic which never failed to refresh him from within. He snatched up his wind breaker and trotted out the back door.

Outside, the sun was struggling in vain to hold to the horizon. It was a bloody fight as dusk painted the western sky with the sanguinary fluid of his foe. Terry admired the beauty of the scene.

He jogged briskly along the trail in back of his house until he was well submerged in the forest. Only then did he slow his pace to a walk. The crispness of the air made his face pleasantly cold. He enjoyed the trail this night as he had enjoyed it for as long as he could remember.

Finally, he reached the point at which he had always stopped. He wanted to plunge more deeply this time, but he had forgotten his flashlight. Though it was dark now, he knew if he went back for his flashlight the spell of the autumn night would be broken and he would not return. Besides it was a fall night and the moon was full.

Curiously, he ejaculated himself into the thickness of the woods. As he wound his way in a vermicular manner around the trees and brush, he felt animated, directed by some unseen force. He was being guided toward something, just what, he did not know.

Soon, he found himself at the foot of a steep incline. Almost mindlessly, he began climbing the hill. It was so steep he had to go about his climb on all fours. The earth was soft and seemed to give every time he began to make progress. He attempted the climb several times before finally reaching the top.

He lay prone, just at the summit of the hill, and heard a voice coming from the other side of the incline. It was a loud familiar voice.

Terry pulled himself up, just enough to enable him to see over the summit. He peered down the incline into a large clearing on the other side. The clearing was lighted by the sporadic placement of stake torches which were driven into the ground. Burning defiantly, the red and

yellow flames shed light on what should have remained in darkness.

It was the pastor of Terry's church who broke the silence of the night with his pompous, copious speech. Terry let his eyes leave Reverend Colby and gaze upon another sight just as bewildering. Gathered in the clearing, listening attentively to the words of Reverend Colby, were all the elders of his church.

There were at least fifty people in the grim congregation below, and Terry knew them all. There were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hagerly, old man Gragston, and Deacon Corne. Even dear old Imogene Crates, who always made such great apple pie, was there. The biggest shock of all came when Terry saw his parents sitting in the circular congregation.

Reverend Colby stood in the center of the circle on a broad tree stump. His silver hair seemed ablaze in the light of the flickering torches. His bellowing voice echoed in the night:

"Now turn in your Bibles, if you will, to the Book of Isaiah, chapter sixty-six, verse twenty-four. 'And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: For their Wyrms shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.'"

Terry inched his way over the hill and down the incline. He wanted to inspect the curious scene more closely.

Reverend Colby continued: "Brothers and sisters of a true but dying faith, we are the transgressors of which the Word speaks."

Terry felt struck and for the first time realized his fear.

"We do not know life as others know it. We are merely the carcasses of men which have been animated by some primitive force. Were we known for what we truly are, we would be abhorred by all flesh. Therefore, we must maintain our secrecy until the Prophecy is fulfilled. Though we are damned people, we are rich: For we are the heirs of a terrestrial heaven. This Earth is our inheritance.

"Since the beginning of time, we have been the keepers of the Wyrms!"

"Blessed is the Wyrms: For he shall inherit the earth!" shouted Deacon Corne. "Damned is he! Damned are we! Blessed is he! Blessed are we!"

"Amen!" yelled Terry's father.

"Amen," intoned Reverend Colby. "For it is written in the Book of Jonah, 'God prepared a Wyrms when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.' Planet Earth is the gourd of which the Word speaks. Long, long ago God grew disgusted with the gourd. In his disgust he sent the Wyrms. Even now, the Wyrms incubates beneath the surface of the gourd."

Terry felt his heart leaping into his throat. He was confused and scared beyond reason. Quietly he tried to ascend the hill.

Reverend Colby continued his malediction: "When the incubation period is completed, the Wyrms will rise to the surface. After he has inherited the flesh of all those interred within the gourd, he will begin his reign in full. No longer will he be confined to a subterranean existence. He will claim all that is the Earth's, all that is the gourd's. And we shall reign by his side. Though this is divine within itself, we shall not know ultimate ecstasy until we too are consumed by the . . ."

A stick snapped. A stone tumbled down the incline. Terry was scurrying up the bank. The earth gave as he slid to the base of the hill. He glanced at the unholy congregation. Their faces looked demonic in the torch light.

"Brother and sister Wilks," sighed Reverend Colby. "Your adopted son has found us out."

Terry frantically commenced to climb.

"Of course you know what must be done," intoned Reverend Colby.

"We do," the Wilkses replied, devoid of feeling.

Terry was halfway up the bank. He looked over his shoulder. The congregation was ambling towards the incline with torches held high and flashlights clicking on.

The ground crumbled again. Terry grabbed for a hand hold. He knocked his glasses off. Terry caught his balance, but his glasses tumbled down the hill. He lunged for the summit.

"Om ba hara," the congregation chanted as he started down the other side. "The Wyrms! The Wyrms! The Wyrms!"

Terry ran blindly through the woods. "Lo, 'tis a gala night," he thought.

"Terry, where are you?" a voice called from the trail.

Terry woke. He sprang to his feet with a reflex born of

terror. He ripped through the brush, trying to distance himself from the trail.

Suddenly, he was in another clearing. It was well lighted by torches and flashlights. He had been tricked. He was completely encircled by the congregation. He hesitated. "Lo, 'tis a gala night played over and over in his spinning head. But for the first time he remembered where it came from. It was a line from a poem he had quoted back in junior high school. It was by Poe.

The circle tightened. The ground was giving way beneath his feet. Suddenly he was at the bottom of a pit. His parents and Reverend Colby smiled coldly as they and the congregation pushed the earth in on top of him.

In his horror Terry remembered the last stanza of the poem:

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each dying form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the seraphs, all haggard and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And the hero the Conqueror Wyrms.

The cold, heavy dirt covered him, and something huge was shifting and writhing nearby . . .

DORIS DIOSA DAVENPORT

"All I Want is / all I can get,
and then some."

-J.B., from a blues

naw, sugah,
it really is not
like that, it
ain't like that, at all.

i consider you
a discrete &
 separate
 text
singular in your binding,
semi-precious in content or
 rather intent & intended
 reader response

but

i see you as
a separate text
one volume in a
multi-volume set whose
main theme - and flaw - is

boredom.

Teachers (or rather, on being
a teacher at GJC)

Today,

teachers are

depleted like white teens,
while cruising, use up gas

consumed
like natural resources

they are expected to be
lover
confidante
mother-father-best friend.
psychologist
chiropractor
whipping post
counselor
alchemist threatening change but
condoning whines & weak "I tried"

expected to be -
required to be -
one or all of the above
but to be

learned from,
appreciated,
respected for

none.

(12/84)



Amber West, "Feline"

CHRIS McMICHAEL

Creation's Children

Ancient Indian Dances
Whirling in your mind
Wonderment of the true
Meanings of the race of mankind
Bear, Wolf, Eagle,
Salmon, Raven, Beaver
These beings were
The mystic citizens of the old earth mother
Now they are called dirty names
Killer, Dumb, Nuisance, Scavenger
What right has man
To these magical creatures slaughter
The dances in your brain
Are danced in true celebration
Of a world that can be the home of
The children of creation.

The Tree

The great tree stands
Alone now
In the city park.
In time of old
It grew among its own kind.

Now the tree
is alone
Like an old man who
has lost his wife
And cries & drinks himself to sleep.

Lost

- Ghost people
Ancient inhabitants
of a world worth
living in.
They walk the night
searching for the pure world
they left years ago.

Spartus 21-3017-180 50180

There is a clock in my room.
Its green, broken numerals
counting away the minutes,
the very seconds
of my life.
It embodies the
absurdities of our lives
in just the fact that
a small mass of
wires & transistors
can measure the life
within us all.

Rattle, Rattle, Thump

Rattle, rattle, thump.
These sounds invade my thoughts
As my little imported auto
Scrambles down the loose
gravel & potholes that are my road for the night.
My thoughts turn to wonder
What some Japanese auto maker
Would say
If he could see where
His creation was now,
Clambering down this
Appalachian Mountain logging road
In the dark.
Hell, I guess he'd say,
"Foolish American"
And let it go.

JIM KLINE

In Defence of the Limeric

A Limerode . . .

Defending the noblest of songs,
Attempting to right all the wrongs,
To make known to the masses
That the limerick surpasses
The sonnets, the odes, and the jongs

Of jongleurs of rhymes and such scops
That boast that their meter is tops,
Yet all they can do
Is not worth a poo
If it doesn't make use of odd stops

In meter of eight beats a line
For one, two, and five of same rhyme,
With third line and four
A rhyming encore
Of syllables five at a time.

DENISE CAPE

Indian Summer

Summer's ending,
Winter's coming,
And my world is in between,

The trees are changing,
Rearranging,
Hints of gold for leaves once green.

Cool air is blowing,
Breezes flowing,
Trailing winter very near.

The spicy coolness,
And wondrous newness
Of Indian summer is in the air.

South Dakota

South Dakota, how I miss you,
How I long to see again
All your rolling green prairies, and
your smooth, inviting land.

Shades of green gently stretching
Just as far as the eye can see,
Gentle winds caress your hillsides,
Whispering lightly, calm, and free.

Fluffy clouds hang, suspended
In the blue sky overhead,
And across your wondrous flatlands,
Both sunshine and shadows are softly spread.

How your beauty seems to beckon,
The memories calling me back to you,
Saying, "Return, and stay here" and
Someday that's what I will do.

CANDACE CHELLEW

Darkness

Loneliness finds me again
And settles in for the night
And takes me once again
To the place I can only feel
right

Back in the depths of my
mind

My one place to feel safe
There myself I can find
My one way to escape

Open up your eyes
And look to the night skies
In the darkness you will
find

No one can take your
dreams away

Exhaustion and depression
My closest friends are here
To eat away in succession
All happiness with a tear
The headgames we must
play

To keep our secrets quiet
From those who stalk the
day

They can only come out at
night.

Open up your eyes
And look to the night skies
In the darkness you will
find
No one can steal your
dreams away.

The people that you see
They will tell you lies
They say "Count on me"
But never seem to hear
your cries
Depend on yourself
And then you will show
A strength inside yourself
You thought you'd never
know.

Light of day fades
And leaves the darkness
behind
And now I can see the
shades
Of truth inside my mind
In darkness there is light
And dreams can all come
true
When finally comes the
night
And I can dream of you.

TERESA SLOAN

Revival From A Desperate Moment

The time has come,
The moment I so desperately have
hoped would never arrive.
Here he stands before me
Trying to assure me
that he will be back,
That this departure will only
be temporary.
I search deep into my heart
hoping to grasp the reality
That he may never return.
This very twinkling of time,
from first to last
Should feel like a thorn in my flesh,
But my heart is not saddened.
My heart is lively and sparkling
with the very thought that
He has been a part of my life.
Not everything in life can last forever
but...
Memories do.

JUDY HALL

Bluebird Pair

A flash of blue
 With burnished breast,
A twig of pine
 Used for her nest,
A darting glance,
 Now here and there,
Sweet song of spring -
 It fills the air.

The bluebird pair
 Chose nesting site
Near my window,
 To my delight;
The sun shines bright;
 The dogwood blooms;
New neighbors they,
 With offspring soon!

THOMAS TUGGLE

Foule in Daunger

Last year she was a molting bird,
With heavy eyes she stopped my eyes
Then fluttered by without a word.
I think of her in those old days

Now as she glides across the lawn,
Arm in arm with her new love,
New feathered, proud as any swan,
Contented as a brooding dove.

Yet when I see her walk apart
Quick sidelong looks somehow express
The fears of a still molting heart
For all the plumage of her face.

STATES WING

Thousands Starving

Thousands starving, thousands crying,
 thousands feast, while children are dying
A loaf of bread, a bit of grain
 a sip of water will help ease the pain.
Unheard tears of both parent and child
 tears of death in the Ethiopian wilds.
No help from those who have it all.
 No help to children, pitiful and small.
So many lives will pass from this earth,
 innocent children will be starving from birth.
We've waited long enough, too long for some,
 let us help now and for years to come.
Unheard tears of both parent and child,
 tears of death in the Ethiopian wilds.

The Fight

It started late before supper one night,
 The roar of a tremendous fight.
He yelled and cursed with all his might,
 I felt alone, and shook with fright.

He said I was a liar and a cheat at that,
 I'm a bum and a strike-out king at bat.
I ran to my room, my eyes couldn't see,
 To hide my tears I had to flee.

The next time I saw that mean old man,
 He was the parent, the one I couldn't stand.
Not one word of apology has been spoken yet,
 Or never will be, I care to bet.



Amber West, "Shell"

BRENDA C. PROCTOR

OF OLD MEN AND MOTORBOATS

I am sure all of you have been taught to respect your elders; it was whipped into me when I was quite young - and it stuck. Maybe if my Mom had known the trouble this little lesson was going to cause me one day, she might have thought to tell me about common sense, too.

My story begins with a small outboard motorboat—but it wasn't ours. (My story starts getting a little tricky here, so please try to follow.) The boat belonged to my husband's ex-father-in-law. Well, actually, it really belonged to my husband's ex-wife. (Well, actually, now that I think of it, I am not sure who the boat really belonged to.) Whatever!

The day started out really nice—that is until I got a phone call from Irv (that's my husband's ex-father-in-law). Irv had driven down from Wisconsin to pick up the boat. I wasn't particularly thrilled because Glen (that's my husband) was out of town which meant I was going to have to help Irv (you remember him, he's my husband's ex-father-in-law) with the boat. (Irv really doesn't care for me very much—wonder why?)

Anyway, Irv finally found our house and we were ready to move the boat, right?—wrong! It seemed that Irv failed to mention he was driving a large motorhome. This was a definite problem. You see, our driveway has a slope of about ninety degrees and needless to say, Irv might get the motorhome down the driveway, but he would not have a prayer of getting it back up. And of course, I did not have a trailer hitch on my car. WHAT-TO-DO!

(It's about to get really exciting—so pay attention!) Hey, no problem. Good old Irv came up with a brilliant solution. He figured that since the boat was so small, he

could just chain it to my car and I could pull that sucker right out of there. After explaining that my car was a little, bitty Datsun and could not possibly pull that boat up the driveway, Irv assured me that he knew my car could pull it with absolutely no trouble. After all, Irv was seventy rears old and owned a marina, so he should know what he was talking about, right? (Could have fooled me.) Well, I listened attentively and tried to remember that he was my elder and you should always respect your elders. However, all the while, I kept hearing this little oice over my left shoulder saying "you fook, you fool—your car can't pull that boat."

Needless to say, I ignored that little voice and lit Irv chain the boat to my little, bitty car. When I realized Irv expected me to drag the boat and trailer up the driveway, that little voice started yelling even louder—"you fool, you fool—it won't work." But after all, Irv worked around boats all the time and he knew it would work.

I managed to drag that boat about halfway up the driveway when my car told me in no uncertain terms, it had gone as far as it could go. Now I'm sitting halfway up a ninety degree driveway praying my brakes will hold, and listening to that damn little voice saying, "you fool, you fool and the old man too—I told you so."

It was about this time when old Irv got another of his brilliant ideas. Irv figured that with the boat halfway up the driveway, he had a chain that was long enough to reach between it and his motor home. He would simply drag the boat up the rest of the way. It sounded like a good idea except, my car was between the boat and the motor home.

"No problem," said good old Irv. His idea was to put blocks behind the trailer wheels to keep it from rolling back down the driveway and a heavy block on the tongue of the trailer to keep it from flipping over. All I had to do was drive my car on up the driveway. Then Irv could simply drag the boat on up.

This time, I looked old Irv right in his good eye and told him I did not think it would work. But old Irv—he assured me it would. Heck, Irv had pulled boats out of situations a lot worse than this mny times before (he said). I finally agreed to try, but I had to put up with that stupid little voice calling me a "fool" again.

Irv got the boat ready and I had just started to let my clutch out when the boat started tipping over. My daughter tried to jump on the tongue of the trailer to hold it down at the same moment my car started to roll back.

(Here everything starts getting a little carzy.) As my car rolled back and the trailer flipped up, Margie's leg got caught between them. Margie (oh by the way, that's my daughter) screamed; old Irv jumped out of the way; and that damned old boat rolled, jumped, swerved, and bounced all the way down the driveway right into the woods. By this time, that damned little voice was screaming "you stupid fool, kill that old man."

' Somehow, I got Margie to the doctor's office to have her leg checked. The doctor said her leg was only bruised, but that he was really worried about me. I believe he thought I needed psychiatric help, especially after the nurses told him I kept slapping my left shoulder yelling "you fool, you fool," and something about "my fault" and "killing a stupid old man."

When the doctor finally assured me that Margie would be all right, I began to realize just how angry I was.

Good old Irv had decided it would be better if he wasn't there when we got back—finally, a good idea. However, the boat was still resting peacefully in the woods. And you know, I would not have been the least bit crushed if it had rolled all the way down to the lake and died an honorable death like it should have. Then, I got a brilliant idea.

I went out to take a good look at that boat. The trailer was balanced very precariously on the edge of a crosstie wall and the boat was half off the trailer. It looked as if any little old push would cause the trailer to tip over. I thought about it as I got myself a large cup of coffee, a pack of cigarettes, and a broom. Then I sat down next to the boat, lit a cigarette, had a sip of coffee, and very softly nudged it with the broom handle. I sat there for over an hour rocking that damn boat before I could convince myself that wrecking it really would not be the wise thing to do. But I cannot lie, it sure would have made me feel a hell of a lot better.

From the midst of all of this madness, I did learn a couple of lessons. (Maybe you should take a hint from

these, too.) The next time I hear a little voice over my shoulder calling me a fool—I will definitely listen—it's probably right. Also, the next time an old man tells me he knows anything—I'm going to haul off and kick him right in the a-a-ankle. I'll probably get into a lot less trouble that way.

C. CRANCE

Feeling Important

Sometime when you are feeling important,
Sometime when your ego's in bloom,
Sometime when you take it for granted that
You are the best qualified in the room

Sometime when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfilled hole.
Just follow these simple directions
And see how they humble your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hands in it up to your wrist,
Take it out and the hole that's remaining,
Is a measure of how much you'll be missed.

You may splash all you wish when you enter,
You may stir up the water galore,
But stop and you'll find that in no time,
It remains the same as before.

The moral of this quaint example,
Is to do just the best that you can,
Be proud of yourself, but remember
There is no indispensable man.

KIM KITCHENS

Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today

Yesterday was sad,
Tomorrow is happy,
Today is both;
Yesterday was gloomy,
Tomorrow is bright and shiny,
Today is both;
Yesterday is dead,
Tomorrow is alive,
Today is both;
Yesterday was reality,
Tomorrow is fantasy,
Today is both.

Special Friend

When the sky is dark and gloomy
And your life is full of pain,
Reach out to that special friend
To touch your soul again.

If you can not see the road
And you're at the end of your rope,
Reach out to that special friend
To fill your life with hope.

If you feel your life in danger,
The grim reaper at your door,
Reach out to that special friend
To save your life once more.

He Knocks

He knocks on the door
With a quiet little rap
You know he's there
When he whispers in your ear
His touch is sweet and gentle
Like a lover in the spring
He wants to take you with him
He wants to take you home
He tells you that he loves you
But suddenly, you're afraid
Yet, once Death touches your soul
Your fear will go away

I Live, I Die

I live.
I laugh, unheard.
I talk, but no one listens.
I grow, without help.
I help, without gratitude.
I cry, but am not comforted.
I love, but an unloved in return.
I care for, but am not cared for.
I hold dear, but am never held.
I watch, but am unwatched.
I hate, and fill with guilt.
I receive, but it is a cold gift.
I die, and no one knows.

RENEE HAND

The Trial

The prosecution listed
All the crimes against my name;
I had no explanation
As I bowed my head in shame.

No witness defended me,
Nor nothing could I say;
My sinful nature was on trial,
For it was judgment day.

I saw the face of God, as
His eyes soon filled with grief;
For in his pure and perfect
Heart, He knew no unbelief.

Then a voice from an obscure place
Did gently, yet firmly say,
"My Father and my only God,
Trust me in this, I pray.

"For I too have known temptation,
And the feelings of that earth.
For I became as one of them
Through my immaculate birth.

"As I was on the desert
I knew weakness deep within-
And though nay I surrendered,
Felt I the power of sin.

"I, too, have felt despair
As I sought to know your will;
For oft I suffered ridicule,
And scorn my heart did chill.

"My father, I beseech You,
In defense of this your child;
To understand and to forgive,
With your Grace, sufficient and mild.

"With one final proclamation,
This child rests in Thy hands;
Please remember - love surviveth yet,
Through sinful, foreign lands."

And with this my great defender
Stepped back within the crowd;
So undeserving, yet loved, felt I,
I cried His name aloud.

"Oh, Lord, my sole salvation,
I now give my life to thee;
For twice Your heart has spoken
To show Your love for me.

'You died once in my place,
Upon a sin-filled cross;
And now you speak in my defense,
That my life shan't be a loss.

'With all that which I am now,
And e'er more shall become;
I give this self-this soul-to you,
To safely pilot home."

To my knees I fell in wonder
At the love shown there to me;
I could never become so worthy
Of this grace - which set me free.

For through His understanding
Christ made the path complete;
He stretched until He reached my
Soul - the Eternal God to meet.

Such is the grace of our loving God
That He bestowed on this our earth,
A defender and a savior:
The way of second birth.



George Evans, "Autumn Branches"

RHONDA CAPE

Summer Storm

Heat,
Shimmering before your eyes.
Clouds,
Building on the horizon.
Wind,
A sudden gust.
Dust devil,
Goes twisting by.
Lightening,
Unzips the sky.
Raindrops,
Beat a tattoo.
Sun,
Shyly peaking through.
Rainbow,
Arching across the sky.
Time,
Stands still.
Gone,
As quick as it came.

J. MILLER GILBERT

Stuff

It's sensible that icicles
 Hang downwards as they grow,
For I would hate to step on one
 That's buried in the snow.

It's really best that tides come in
 And then return to sea,
For if they kept on coming in
 How wet we all would be.

It's best of all that everyone's
 So tolerant today,
That I can write this kind of stuff
 And not get put away.

GINGER ASHWORTH

Nothing is Forever

I'm sure you love me
More than I would believe,
But you have already given
More than you'll receive.
For though your love
Is as deep as the sea,
The water could dry up
And no longer would be.
It may be as pure
As the driven snow,
But soon it's walked on
And purity doesn't show.
My eyes may be as bright
As the stars in the sky,
But as the clouds roll in
Their sparkle begins to dye
My lips may be
As soft as a dove,
But the bird soon dies
And it's nothing to love.
My skin might be
As smooth as a baby's
But as the baby grown old and ugly,
Then it's avoided like the rabies.
My beauty is as
Great as your love,
But that too soon dies
Just like the little dove.



Nancy Strayer, "Clown"

EMILY L. CLEMENS

The 'Poohanny' Squad

Tanned and sleek, oiled and dyed,
 color-coordinated, Maybelline-eyed,
 O.P. shorts and Aigner shoes
 Oh my Lord, they've got the cover girl blues.
 A mouthfull of chewing gum that could choke a horse
 (but only the sugarless kind of course),
 stories of boyfriends and outcasts they tell,
 using the extent of their single brain cell.
 Never alone, in pairs or in twos,
 again, my friend, the covergirl blues.

To Egotists (You know who you are.)

My friends, allow me to introduce myself:
 I am ego, and there is none more fragile.
 I am contained yet overt,
 impressed and impressionble,
 singular and many.
 My names include pride, and I am but one of a thousand.
 As thin as tatted lace,
 I hold the soul together, allowing those who use me
 to stand sometimes alone.
 I can be bruised as the apple,
 shattered like glass,
 fed as a child,
 uplifted like the phoenix.
 I have many faces
 and may include your own.



George Evans, "Grandpa's Corn Bin"



George Evans, "Railroad Cars"

MICHAEL KLEINHEINZ

Fall to Eden

They're loitering out in the streets
again tonight.

They say the heat drove them out
there

disease,
rapture,
despair

have fallen on this town like a
crashing airliner.

The attendants at the Rue Morgue
say that business is coming in
faster than they can process it.

And on the industrial side of town,
on the back wall of a local
laundrymat, are spraypainted the
words that spell for this town
the answer to its cries:

Fall to Eden.

MARILYN LUMPKIN

Mind Power

As you sit there.....wondering
You sit there.....bewildered

You sit there trying to figure out what's
happening in the world today.
You sit there, with the wrinkles
on your face.

The pout at your mouth, your hands in your
pockets.

Wondering.....who turned out the lights
you can't run and hide, because the whole
world is dark.

Who pushed the button to release the evils
of the air?
Who closed the door so that we may not breathe?
Who's closing up our minds so that we can't
think anymore, learn anymore, grow anymore.....
WANT ANYMORE.....

You sit there wondering, you sit there confused.

What good are you.....
If you just sit there?

ROBBY J. SPRIGGS

The Dancing Dead

Souless shells of human shape
Burning eyes and mouths agape,
Waltzing wraiths in harmony,
From the streets have called to me—
Many times have called to me—
Every night have called to me!
Even now they call to me,
Bidding me to rise from bed
And join them, the Dancing Dead!

Their hypnotic melody,
Melancholic symphony,
Sometimes has appealed to me—
Sparked my curiosity—
Led me to inquiry,
And forbade me to return
Or to tell what I did learn.
Yet I returned and did tell
All the secrets learned of Hell.

Still, I know if I submit
On this night of discomfit
To the chanting, crying sound,
I will be forever bound
By the future that man shuns—
By his daughters and his sons,
Who call to me from void shells
To join them in empty cells.

What's That Knocking 'Neath the Ground?

What's that knocking 'neath the ground?
Such a grim and dismal sound,
A rap, a knock, a screech, a moan,
And here I stand—Alas, alone!

Such a hellish howling here,
I know that something draweth near,
Yet I stand amidst the graves
Of witches dead and bloody knaves.

At last I sprint toward the trees
To watch from 'neath the rustling leaves,
And there I see (from forest's edge)
Something crawling from the hedge.

While the others lie in slumber,
This one dares to rise and lumber.
'Tis something horrid, something dread,
Something ghoulish, something dead.

She peers at me with eyeless pits
As something deep inside me flits,
For she walks toward my place
With lipless grin and rotting face.

But still, to move, I dare not try,
Though the Lady draweth nigh.
Mesmerized by cursed charms,
I am lifted in her arms.

At the moon I vainly scream
To renounce this bloody scheme;
But still I'm dropped into the clay
Where she and I shall ever stay—

Now I am knocking 'neath the ground,
Such a grim and dismal sound.
I rap, I knock, I screech, I moan,
For here I lie, no more alone.

BOB TERRELL

Mist

There is mist over the ponds
And flowers in the meadows:
My love for you is brightly showing;

When there is ice on the ponds
And frost on the meadows,
Will your love for me still be flowing?

ELVIA S. PINNIX

Elramo

Te veo triste...muy triste
no sé por qué
¡YA no puedo leer tus ojos!

Me huyes...evitas el mirarme
te pregunto...no respondes
¡YA no puedo leer tus ojos!

La primavera de tus ojos-PASADO,
Largo y triste invierno
en tus pupilas veo,
¡Y YA no puedo leer tus ojos!

Risas-Amistad
Carino-Recuerdos
¿Qué cosa los ha robado?
¿Adónde se han ido?

Amigo mio,
¡Por qué no puedo leerlos!
¿Por qué?
¿Por qué no me dejas ya leer tus ojos?

